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by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Cowboys' 4-0 record surprising

Landry still skeptical of team's perfection

Associated Press

IRVING — Just how perfect are the Dallas Cowboys? Dallas Coach Tom Landry isn't sure, although his team completed the NFL preseason with a perfect record for the first time since 1971.

The Cowboys became only one of three NFL teams with unblemished preseasons with a 20-10 victory over the Houston Oilers Saturday night. Washington and the New York Giants are the other two.

The win gave Dallas a 15-4 record against Houston in preseason games and was the seventh straight over the Oilers in the annual clash for Texas bragging rights.

"You never know how good you are until you tee it up against the best and we'll do that against Washington in the opener," Landry said. "Then we'll know where we are for sure. It's always a great game when you play Washington."

Landry said Dallas' 4-0 record surprised him. "I thought we might be 2-2, but that's the way it went and we'll see what it means," he said.

Landry wasn't overly pleased with Dallas' effort Saturday night. "It was a good tough game but not one of our best," he said. Dallas quarterback Gary Hogeboom rifled a pair of 24-yard touchdown passes to Tony Dorsett and rookie wide receiver Leon "Speedy" Gonzalez. The game-winner came on a 24-yard scoring shot to Gonzalez, a seventh-round pick from Bethune Cookman, in the third period.

The Oilers, who finished the preseason with a 1-3 mark, lost quarterback Warren Moon in the first half with a ripped thumbnail.

"We could have put Warren Moon back in the game and it was tempting but I've been at this game long enough to know better," Houston Coach Hugh Campbell said. "Our defense wore out more than anything else. We had them out there on the field too much."

"We can't help but leave the field thinking we can play with the Cowboys, not that we're at the same level just yet."

The Oilers open their season Sunday in the Astrodome against Miami.

Rangers sweep Royals; Cardinals blank Astros

Associated Press

ARLINGTON — Oddibe McDowell tripled and singled and scored twice Sunday night as the Texas Rangers completed a three-game sweep by beating the Kansas City Royals 5-3.

The Royals remained 2½ games behind first-place California in the American League West. California lost to New York 5-3 earlier in the day.

Winner Mike Mason, 6-12, pitched seven innings, giving up two runs on eight hits. Duane Henry pitched the last two innings for his first save.

Danny Jackson, 12-9, gave up all five Texas runs and took the loss. McDowell led off the Texas first with a triple and scored on a sacrifice fly by Toby Harrah.

After the Royals tied the score in the third on singles by Onix Concepcion and Lonnie Smith and an RBI groundout by George Brett, Texas scored twice in the third.

McDowell was hit by a pitch with one out and took third on a single. McDowell scored on a wild pitch and Pete O'Brien singled home Harrah.

Steve Balboni led off the Kansas City fourth with his 28th home run and Smith singled home a run later in the inning that evened the score.

The Rangers broke the tie with two runs in the fifth. Steve Buechele walked, reached third on a single by Wayne Tolleson and scored when catcher Wathan threw wildly while trying to catch Tolleson attempting to steal.

McDowell singled home Tolleson with the game's final run.

Cardinals 5, Astros 0

ST. LOUIS — Willie McGee smacked three hits, homered and drove in two runs, powering the St. Louis Cardinals to a 5-0 victory Sunday over the Houston Astros behind John Tudor's seven-hitter.

The outcome, aided also by Andy Van Slyke's two hits and two stolen bases, snapped St. Louis' three-game losing streak and Houston's four-game winning streak. The Cardinals had started the day two games ahead of New York in the National League East.

Van Slyke's hits and McGee's homer came off Joe Niekro, 9-11. McGee's homer was his seventh, a career high.

Tudor, without a decision in his previous three Cards starts, improved his record to 16-8 with a five-strikeout, no-walk performance.

Darrell Porter's leadoff single triggered St. Louis' two-run scoring burst in the second. Porter scored on Van Slyke's double and Ozzie Smith's grounder brought home the second run.

McGee, while fortifying his major league-leading batting average to .367, slammed a one-out Niekro delivery over the right-field wall in the fifth.

Tudor's shutout, his first since Aug. 8, was his majors-leading seventh of the year. It whittled the St. Louis left-hander's earned-run average to 2.03 in his staff-leading 10th complete game.

Niekro, in remaining winless since Aug. 2, pitched 5 1-3 innings and yielded all the Cards' runs on 10 hits. McGee and Tommy Herr drove

home insurance runs in the sixth following singles by Mike Jorgensen, Ozzie Smith and Vince Coleman that loaded the bases. McGee's RBI single and Herr's run-scoring forceout came after Mike Madden relieved Niekro.



Other Sunday scores:

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Detroit 14, Oakland 3

Chicago 4, Toronto 1

New York 5, California 3

Seattle 10, Baltimore 2

Boston 10, Minnesota 3

Cleveland 11, Milwaukee 4

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Cincinnati 3, Pittsburgh 2

Chicago 15, Atlanta 2

Philadelphia 4, Los Angeles 1

San Diego 5, Montreal 1

New York 4, San Francisco 3

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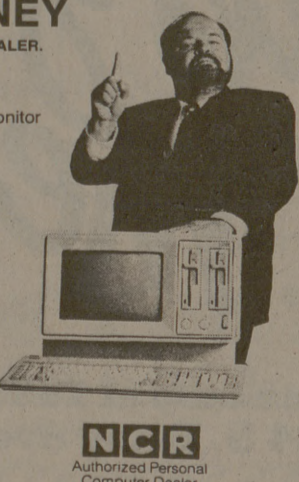
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